WHIRRAKEE

May 2016

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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE BENDIGO FIELD NATURALISTS CLUB

Bendigo Field Naturalists Club Inc.
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Office Bearers for 2015 - 2016

President	*vacant*	
Vice President	Alistair White	0419 613 737
Secretary/Public Officer	Matt Comer	0409 162 627
Treasurer	Ben Goonan	

Positions delegated by the Committee

Minute Secretary	Anne Bridley (for general meetings)	
Excursion sub-committee	**John Lindner**, Simon Hay, Richard Goonan	**5448 3406**
Syllabus organiser	Ben Goonan	
Librarian	Jess Milroy	
Garden sub-committee	Kerrie Norris, Jess Milroy	
Observations coordinator	Jenny Shield	
Supper coordinators	Alistair White, Jess Milroy	
Hall management sub-committee	**Maurie Lewis**, Rob & Glenise Moors, Ben Goonan	**0407427179**
Whirrakee sub-committee	Sabine Wilkens, Alistair White, John McCallum, Ben Goonan	
Whirrakee contact/editor	Sabine Wilkens e-mail: s.wilkens@latrobe.edu.au	5443 2797
Whirrakee mailing coordinator	Jenny Shield	
Website sub-committee	Ben Goonan, **John McCallum**	**54439347**

Membership of the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club is open to all those interested in Natural History. The subscription rates are: Single $40; Family $50; Concession: Single $35; Family $40. *Whirrakee* subscription only is $40.

General meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month. The venue for General meetings is the Golden Square Hall, Old High Street, Golden Square. The meeting starts with members sharing their recent natural history observations. The invited speaker starts at 8:00pm and meetings conclude with supper. The Annual Meeting is held in September.

Committee meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 5:30pm. Members of the Committee are the Office Bearer listed above and the following members: Devi Shanty, Simon Hay, John McCallum, Richard Goonan, Karen Thomas, Jess Milroy

Excursions are conducted regularly and are advertised on the diary page of the *Whirrakee*. The assembly point for excursions is the Golden Square Hall, unless otherwise specified. Several interclub field naturalist campouts are held every year.

The Bendigo Field Naturalists Club is actively involved in local conservation issues. An **indigenous garden** has been established around the Golden Square Hall. Working bees are advertised on the *Whirrakee* diary page.

Bird Observing: Club members conduct regular bird surveys. Please contact Anne Bridley 5442 6188 or Glenise Moors 5439 6254 for details. Special bird observations should be reported to Anne Bridley 5442 6188. To propose bird observing excursions please contact Kerrie Norris 5447 8017.

WHIRRAKEE

Monthly Newsletter of the Bendigo Field Naturalist Club
Vol. 37, No. 4, May 2016
Whirrakee takes its name from the Whirrakee Wattle (*Acacia williamsonii*), which is virtually endemic to the Bendigo region

CONTENT

Item	Contributor	Page
Short notices		3
Colour photos	various contributors	4-7
Observations	via Jenny Shield and Richard Goonan	8
Bird survey at Coliban water treatment works	Jane Cleary	9
SEANA camp report form Queenscliff	Jane Cleary	9
April Committee meeting summary	compiled by John McCallum	10

Authors are responsible for the accuracy of the information they use and also for any opinions expressed in their articles. Contributions should be posted or e-mailed to the editor at least two days prior to the last Wednesday of the month. They will be included as soon as possible after they are received, although space restrictions occasionally require shortening of articles or holding them over till the following edition of *Whirrakee*.
Articles in *Whirrakee* may be reproduced, but permission should be obtained from the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club, and acknowledgment should be given to the author and the Club. Some back issues are still available on request.

Editor's Note
There is so much to report and so little space...What an unusual problem to have. In April we had several excursions and all the reports are waiting to be published (and none of them made it into this edition). My apologies for the delay and getting these reports to you, nevertheless, we have a report for the water bird count, the SEANA camp, a comprehensive list of observations and a great range of photos this month and putting it altogether was fun. In addition, I am sure many members will appreciate getting a look behind the scenes of the club, with the committee meeting summaries now a regular feature; thanks to John McCallum for summarising these.

Text and front page photograph: Rob Watkins
While attending a weekend camp of the Victorian Nature Photography Group at Apollo Bay last weekend, the local Information Center advised of sightings of a lone **Beach Stone Curlew** a couple of kms West of the nearby community of Marengo. On Monday 18th April, Cynthia and I found the bird on a small isolated beach between extensive rock platforms. Even though we halted our approach at the first sighting when about 75 m away, the bird moved on a few more metres to settle down with its body on the beach beside tall foliage which offered complete cover if needed. The bird was obviously concerned at our arrival and with its head constantly bobbing, moved about from place to place, sometimes partly concealed by kelp or dry grass ...continued on page 11

Short Notices

BFNC Wild Weekly Walks – Nature Knowledge Exchange,
Excursions, 9am-12pm Saturdays
Meet at 8:50am at the Golden Square Hall to attend. Please carry with you some water and a light snack, along with clothing suitable for the prevailing conditions. Walks will be short and of easy to moderate difficulty, suitable for anyone with a basic level of fitness.
The excursions in **May** will include:

- 7th May – Wildflower drive
- 14th May – Wellsford Forest
- 21st May – One Tree Hill
- 28th May - Ravenswood

Call **Richard on 0423418815 or email richard.goonan@optusnet.com.au** to find out more or **check the club's website** at www.bendigofieldnaturalists.asn.au for the latest updates.
(More details about these walks was on pg 3 in the April *Whirrakee*)

Workshop 6: Seeds and Seedlings
Presenter: Matt Comer
Date: 25/05/2016
Time: 7:00pm, Golden Square Hall
RSVP: Please register your interest via info@bendigofieldnaturalists.asn.au or by post to PO Box 396 Bendigo VIC 3552.
What to bring: Enthusiasm! and images if you have any, your field guides and notes, paper and pen. More information: www.bendigofieldnaturalists.asn.au

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Peter Ellis Memorial Planting
from Matt Comer
A special planting day is to be held at the Club's native garden at the Golden Square Hall in tribute to Peter Ellis.
Peter was a member of the City of Greater Bendigo Heritage Advisory Committee and this committee has approached our club seeking to honour Peter's memory in an appropriate way. It was decided that jointly planting some native plants in the garden would be a fitting way to remember Peter. Members of the heritage advisory committee have offered to contribute plants and labour to the working bee. Callum Walker from DELWP (and a member of the heritage advisory committee) will also provide plants and support for the project. As will the City of Greater Bendigo natural reserves staff. BFNC members are also invited to buy and then donate plants for the working bee from an approved selection held at Goldfields Revegetation nursery (contact Matt for details).
The event is to be held on **Sunday 22nd May from 10am** and will include planting of tubestock, planting of a specimen tree in honour of Peter, short speeches and morning tea (provided).
Please RSVP for the event by the May General meeting (11th May) for catering and equipment purposes.
Please also bring any appropriate planting tools/gloves (some tools will be provided)
For any further information please feel free to contact Matt Comer, Ben Goonan or Kerrie Norris.

The Friends of the Bendigo-Kilmore Rail Trail intend to provide signage that will help users understand something of the wild-life and plants that they might encounter along the trail. At this stage it will probably be an interpretive notice-board at or near the Bennett's Road crossing where there is a "Field Naturalists Reserve" already signposted. The group has contacted our club asking for help in selecting a few representative plants and animals that might be used in the project and we have undertaken to become involved. We would also provide some information about each species. I would like to have a meeting with any club members who would be prepared to contribute their knowledge of the area or make other suggestions about the project. We could meet at the site.
Please contact me if you would like to help.
John McCallum mccallum@minopher.net.au
0408 359 011 or 5443 9347

A new face of the Club

Karen Thomas and others have been developing a new face of the club, the **Facebook page** Members can contact the committee if they wish to be added to be able to post observations or advertise special events. Check it out.

Left below: Diana Collier with some beautiful flowers at the March general meeting, presented by the club in recognition of her very long service on the committee and as club librarian. Diana retired from her post and the club has hugely benefitted from her input and enthusiasm. (Photographer: Alistair White). Jess Milroy is the new club librarian.

Below: Parsons Bands, *Eriochilus cucullatus*, found in mid-April (with help from Devi Shanty) near the corner of Diamond Hill Road and Callinans Lane. (Photographer: John McCallum)

Fieldnatting at its best The weather, the fauna, the company…

Karen Thomas wrote: 'we took this photo (left, above) in the Diamond Hill area recently …Kerrie acting as the background support. What were they looking at? …The Golden Orb spider, *Nephila edulis*. Is it called 'golden orb' because the web is golden? Jenny Shield supplied the photo of another orb spider from Brisbane for comparison, *Nephila plumipes*. She said: '*Nephila plumipes* have a golden web. My impression from my time in Brisbane in 1993 is that *Nephila plumipes* webs are a deeper golden colour and the web of *Nephila edulis* is more a creamy yellow, but my February photograph doesn't bear that out. Maybe there is a variation in web colour for both species'.

Nephila edulis, Bendigo Regional Park Diamond Hill, April 2016 (Karen Thomas)

Nephila plumipes… Boondall Wetlands, February 1993 (Jenny Shield)

A rare sight
Karen Thomas recently heard a buzzing in her garden. It was a sawfly, *Perga affinis* (?), warming up its wings. Whilst the adults are not commonly seen, most people would have seen the black (spitfire) larva that occur in big clumps on eucalypt trees. The larvae spit eucalyptus oil at you if you come too close, hence their name.

Impossible Possum
Kerrie Norris writes: 'Have to laugh that I put a hollow log on a tank stand for owlet night-jars in particular (approx 20 yrs ago) because I thought it impossible for possums to access. They obviously have wonderful clinging agility!

Below; Juvenile and adult **Great Crested Grebe** spotted at Crusoe reservoir in late April (photographer: Simon Smith)

SEANA camp photos (photographer: Jane Cleary).
Here are the three photographs from the recent SEANA Camp. For the report, see page 9.

Below: Rocky agglomeration at Mud Island

Above: Shells collected on Mud Island

Right: the very fresh rockfall

Below: an unusual visitor to the Greater Bendigo National Park. Lauren Rickards spotted this one on a run in the park on 24/4/16, just off the closed road near Lauden's Hill. Has anybody else seen these visitors in the park?

Observations from General Meeting 13th April 2016 summarised by Jenny Shield

Bev Culvenor
14 Collins Court, Bendigo: I've heard noises on my roof over a period of time and wondered what was causing them. From a high point on my block, I noticed a raven banging a bone on the evaporative cooler unit, and it appeared to be also deliberately dropping the bone regularly. This has been occurring over many weeks and explains why I find discarded bones around my yard. I had thought dogs must be bringing them in.

Janet Justin
9th and 10th April, 2016, Queenscliff
Flock of Black Cockatoos (yellow-tail). Numerous sightings over the weekend.

Elaine Mathison
12th April 2016, Back Creek
About 10 magpie larks foraging along the bank. 10-12 galahs also feeding in the same area, morning and late afternoon.

Jess Milroy
8th April 2016, Bendigo Creek, near Craig Street, Long Gully
A pink-tailed worm lizard?
It was tiny, the length of my index finger. It ran across the path into the grass and back across the path into the grass on the other side, in front of me, when clearing the path of overhanging branches.

Jane Cleary
Hattah Lakes National Park
Last visit followed flooding when Lakes Hattah, Billa and Arawade were joined. Now the water level is low. At the end of our picnic, we were joined by a brown snake. After this, we were joined by a group of Apostle birds who foraged around our feet. There has been much lake-side revegetation. Standing in the water, young *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*, then a bare strip of sand merging into well established Eumongs. Those were quite infrequent. Beyond further were *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* and finally the big old River Red Gums which once marked the edge of vegetation.

Jane Cleary
12th April 2016, Goynes Road Epsom
Flock of small birds calling. Identified Yellow-rumped Thornbill and Yellow/Little Thornbill amongst others.

...and some further observations from Richard Goonan
10 March – 12 Rainbow Bee-eaters were seen flying over Kangaroo Gully.

29 March – Camping at Warburton's Bridge near Glenluce after Easter - it was an excellent bird watching area. Despite the Loddon River being dry, there was a great range of local birds present and easily observed among the riparian vegetation. It was pleasing to see 12 Brown Quail feeding along the riverbank. Other species included Scrub Wrens, Red-Browed Firetails, Yellow-tufted/Yellow-faced/White-eared/Black-chinned Honeyeaters, Brown Treecreepers, Yellow Robin, and Golden Whistler.

12 April – During a walk at Mt Alexander near Shepherds Lookout I was fortunate to observe an unusual Mantis. The Black Bark Mantis (most likely *Paraoxypilus tasmaniensis)* was a wingless female scampering across open mossy/grassy areas. There are only 35 records for this species in the Atlas of Living Australia, a simple photograph uploaded to the Bowerbird website will be a valuable contribution to better distribution data for this species. Log into the clubs Bowerbird project to view some images of this intriguing Mantis. Also seen during this walk was a wingless female *Diamma bicolour* (Bluebottle wasp), these are sometimes confused for ants. This parasitic wasp searches across the ground for Mole Cricket holes locating crickets to lay their eggs in. As we were sitting and resting on the way back, another wasp species was observed and likely to be of the Gasteruptiidae family, these are also parasitic. This distinctive group of wasps have long slender abdomens and ovipositors, identification to be confirmed. Photos can be found on the clubs Bowerbird project page.

12 April – Although the dry autumn has seen little fungi activity so far, one *Boletus* was found along the Shepherds Lookout track. This distinctive *Boletus* rapidly stained blue where the flesh was bruised.

18 April – 1 Chestnut-rumped Heathwren along the lakeside track at Crusoe Reservoir.

19 April – Crusoe Reservoir, 1 male Red-capped Robin in the dry lakebed habitat, 2 Crimson Rosellas feeding on *Cassinia arcuata* seed, the birds were seen holding stems of *Cassinia* and slowly chewing on the sections with seed heads?

23 April – White Hills, 1 male Red-capped Robin, 1 male Flame Robin, 1 Tawny-crowned Honeyeater, 7 Fork-tailed kites, 1 Black-shouldered kite, white-backed swallow.

24 April – Autumn Greenhoods (*Pterostylis revoluta*), Mandurang forest (north section), plants beginning to flower, some short specimens already finished, several small groups and individuals scattered through forest.

Bird survey at Coliban water treatment works, Epsom, Friday 11th March, 2016
by Jane Cleary
N.B. Joy Clusker's photos of this excursion were in the April Whirrakee

The highlights: a (young) white bellied Sea Eagle, a number of Darters and the appearance of a pair of Australasian Shelduck. These were once common, but now not often seen. Chestnut Teal were displaying. Hundreds of small cicada shells were along the fence line. There were a few dragonfly nymphs and other small flies.

Bird List

Blue-billed Duck	Musk Duck
Black Swan	Australiasan Shelduck
Austin Wood Duck	Pacific Black Duck
Australian Shoveler	Grey Teal
Hard head	Australian Grebe
Hoary-headed Grebe	Darter
Little Pied Cormorant	Pied Cormorant
Australian Pelican	White-faced Heron
Australian White Ivis	Whistling Kite
White-bellied Sea Eagle	Brown Goshawk
Little Eagle	Purple Swamphen
Dusty Moorhen	Eurasian Coot
Black-fronted Dotterel	Masked Lapwing
Silver Gull	Crested Pigeon
Peaceful Dove	Galah
Long-billed Corella	Rainbow Lorikeet
Musk Lorikeet	Eastern Rosella
Red-rumped Parrot	Superb Fairy Wren
Striated Pardalote	Red Wattlebird
White-plumed Honeyeater	New Holland HE
Crested Shrike-tit	Grey Shrike-thrush
Magpie-lark	Willie Wagtail
Grey Butcherbird	Australian Magpie
Australian Raven	Red-browed Finch
Welcome Swallow	Tree Martin
Fairy Martin	Clam Reed-warbler
Silvereye	Common Blackbird

Next waterbird survey: Friday August 12.

SEANA Camp Queenscliff report
Friday – Monday 8-11 April 2016
by Jane Cleary

This was the autumn camp held at a comfortable venue with meals provided.
As usual, there was a comprehensive programme of activities covering geology, botany, ecology, beach activities and bird watching.
Saturday: Full day excursion to Mud Island in the Bay. An 8:30am start with boat ride out and a day landing before we walked around the island. Ostensibly a bird watching activity. I, and others, beachcombed and collected shells. These cannot be removed, instead we made a photographic record of varieties collected, two of which were not identified (see page 7).
The return journey took us past Pope's Eye where we saw gannets and on to South Channel fort where we toured the fort on foot. Returning, we saw hundreds of mullet breaking the surface. Were they being hunted from below? Seals are plentiful as in years past, and dolphins swam nearby. A thoroughly fulfilling day for all.

Sunday am: Barwon Heads Rock Pools and Lobster Pot Museum. Never before have I see so little life in the park. There were various ideas of the cause.
Sunday pm: Geology of north Bellarine Peninsula. The highlights were seeing ancient weathered basalt. The deposit was formed millions of years ago from volcanoes erupting from land now under the sea. It has become soft clay in a variety of colours. Further along the coast we encountered a rock fall, which had occurred since the excursion the previous day (see page 7). We had been told this was a particularly good spot for education and very stable and safe.

Evening speakers covered the local natural history, geology of the Bellarine Peninsula, local sea life, sea mammals and wading birds all with superb slides.
These camps are open to all Field Naturalists and are an excellent way to visit and learn about parts of our state from locals with great experience.

Summary of Committee business from the meeting of 22 April 2016

- The Bullying and Harassment Policy was formally adopted. The policy identifies that a "Bullying and Harassment Officer" be appointed as a person that someone could go to in confidence if they felt aggrieved in this area. Simon Hay nominated to fill the position and was appointed by the Committee.
- Draft policy documents (Occupational Health and Safety, Policies and Procedures) have been adopted in principle and sub-committees are continuing to work on fine-tuning these.
- The need for Guidelines to assist the committee when considering making donations to other organisations was discussed and it was decided to continue this at an additional committee meeting to focus on overall financial policy including budgeting and reporting to the membership.
- Arrangements are in place for a memorial planting at the Golden Square Hall garden in memory of Peter Ellis. Date is May 22. Members to be advised of details.
- Discussion on club shirts was carried over until the next general meeting and an indication of support for the idea will be sought then.
- Hall business included the following:
  - Because the Golden Square Senior Citizens Club was wound up some time ago, the building will be known as "Golden Square Hall"
  - We are designing a new sign, which will be funded by the City, to identify the hall in accordance with the above
  - Bendigo Historical Society to take custodianship of GSSCC honour boards
  - Evacuation signs are to be made and installed in the hall
- Simple name badges for club members (convention card style) will be made available at meetings
- The committee is required to maintain an accurate register of key sets, a register will be established, all member with keys are asked to inform the committee asap.
- A meeting to discuss content for a sign on the O'Keefe Rail Tail will be held at Bennetts Road as part of the Saturday walk on 30 May. All are welcome.
- Committee endorsed the BFNC Facebook page, with a review in three months. It has been running since December and so far it has been successful in creating interest and promoting club activities (see photo on pg 4) Members will be advised of the guidelines.

On March 20, the Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Water released the draft Biodiversity Plan titled ***'Protecting Victoria's Environment – Biodiversity 2036'*** for public consultation. The draft plan has been released for an eight week consultation period until **15 May 2016.** The draft plan and consultation questions can be found at DELWP's consultation website HaveYourSay at:http://haveyoursay.delwp.vic.gov.au/biodiversity-plan
The finalised Biodiversity Plan is scheduled for release later this year

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Diary

All Club meetings are held at the Golden Square Hall, Old High St Golden Square, unless otherwise indicated.

Wednesday, 11th May **7.30pm**
Andrew Skeoch, proprietor of 'Listening Earth', is known to many members. Andrew is returning to the club for a talk titled: 'What can we learn from listening to nature'. Highly recommended!!

Excursions

New regular Saturday excursion activities
Non-members welcome, suitable for families
Weekly from 9am to 12pm (no cost)
Meet at Golden Square Hall (please consider car-pooling)
Contact Richard on 0423418815 or email richard.goonan@oprtusnet.com.au
Excursions for May are planned as follows:

- 7th May – Wildflower drive
- 14th May – Wellsford Forest
- 21st May – One Tree Hill
- 28th May – Ravenswood

See page 3 for what to bring and more details

BFNC Workshops 25th May **7.00pm**
Golden Square Hall
'Seeds and Seedlings' led by Matt Comer.
See page 3 for details.

Family Nature Club

The Nature Club activities will continue in 2016, so look out for announcements or check out their website. **Registration:**
Bendigonatureclub@gmail.com or 5443-1326
http://bendigofamilynatureclub.blogspot.com/

Bendigo Native Plant Group meeting.
All interested people are welcome to come along. Meeting starts at 7:30pm on the third Tuesday of the month, Golden Square Hall.
The next meeting is on the 17th May.

Wildlife Rescue & Information Network Inc.

W.R.I.N. is an organisation dedicated to the care of orphaned, sick or injured native animals. It is fully endorsed by the Dept of Sustainability and Environment.
Please call our Emergency Number for Help for Fauna in Need. Phone: 0419 356433.
WRIN meetings held on the 1st Saturday of the month at 1pm the Golden Square Hall

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Australian Naturalists Network

The ANN Get-Together for 2016 (ANN16) will be held in Western Australia and hosted by the WA Naturalists' Club.
Please contact the ANN 2016 Committee and the secretary Margaret Larke by email at ANN16@wanaturalists.org.au; mlarke@iinet.net.au for more information.

New book...

If you're interested in learning more about the tiny creatures that are all around us, insect expert Michelle Gleeson – also known as 'The Bug Lady' – explains what you really need to know about insects in her new book *Miniature Lives: Identifying Insects in Your Home and Garden* from CSIRO Publishing.
The book will be especially useful if there are children in your life who are always asking questions about their latest such discoveries...
ISBN: 9781486301379 - AU $ 39.95. Order at: http://www.publish.csiro.au/pid/7264.htm

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Front page photo... continued:

When another group arrived the bird moved further out across a vast rock platform towards the sea. Pizzey & Knight's Birds of Australia list the bird as "rare south of Cairns", but an isolated number are known around the extreme eastern coast of Victoria. The rare visitor could easily be distinguished from the Bush Stone Curlew by the thicker longer bill carrying a yellow band in front of the forehead.
Note re image quality: Quality suffered by the distance involved to the subject.